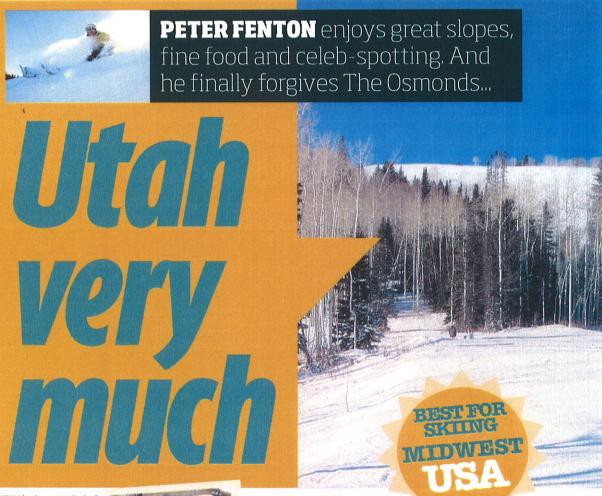
# SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON OUR FORUM AT WHAT OF HOLIDAY IDEAS Y IAIN MAYHEW

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UTAH had a great deal of making up to do. While teenagers in the Swinging 60s had the Beatles, the Stones and Jimi Hendrix, my generation had to suffer The Osmonds.

Donny crooning Puppy Love, Jimmy squeaking Long Haired Lover From Liverpool, Marie

whining Paper Roses.

If none of the above rings a bell, he grateful. Fresh out of Ogden. near Salt Lake City, the clean-cut singing group with the dazzling teeth haunted the charts throughout the 70s until the punk revolution spat them out.

So for me that was Utah: Mormons, The Osmonds, oh yes and land speed attempts on the desert salt flats. Until now.

Because Utah's got snow. The greatest snow on earth, if the state slogan is to be believed. It's always had snow, of course, it's just that the Osmonds' teeth were whiter. And as a fairly niche destination with UK ski tour operators, it is still largely undiscovered by Brits. The Wasatch range, on the

western edge of the Rockies over-looking Salt Lake City, is home to



CLASSES: The area is great for youngsters

some of America's finest ski resorts. Park City hosted the 2002 Winter Olympics. Millionaires' playground Deer Valley is regularly voted America's top resort. And Robert Redford liked Mount Timpanogos so much, he bought a lump of it. But the common perception is still of a rather dour,

religion-flavoured destination. So let's correct a few common

misconceptions straight away. While I was in Salt Lake While I was in Salt Lake City, no one tried to sell me a Book of Mormon or take not a prayer meeting. Although the Temple HO of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is in Salt Lake City, less than half its population is LDS as the population is LDS, as the Mormons are known locally. Nor do they all have a harem full of wives.

harem full of wives. Polygamy was outlawed at the end of the 19th century. Secondly, and more importantly to some of us. it is not a "dry" state. Beer, provided it does not exceed 3.2 per cent alcohol by volume, is freely avail-able. Stronger beers and spirits are available at bars for a one-time five "club membership" charge,

payable by one person in your party.
The main street of Park City
alone has 100 bars and restaurants.

As the slogan of locally-brewed ale Polygamy Porter goes: Why have just one?

Utah's ski resorts are nothing if not accessible. Downtown Salt Lake City is a five-minute drive

from the airport. Within an hour after landing there, you can be in one of 11 ski

resorts surrounding the city.
Forget the long transfers associated with Colorado, California or many European ski centres. However, there is still no direct flight from the UK to SLC, though

a new service from Paris has been a success. The resorts have good shuttle bus services but if you really want to explore the area, rent a car or 4x4

So is it worth the effort to get there? Here's a look at the major ski areas around Salt Lake City...

## **BEST FOR POWDER SKIERS**

ALTA/SNOWBIRD

Utah's snow benefits from what is called the Lake Effect. Storms sweep across from the Pacific, the Mounda depart shiping the deputer. Nevada desert shrinks the droplets reveal desert strinks the dropters then rising air from the Salt Lake gives it all a turbo boost before it hits the mountains. The result is huge dumps of dry, powdery snow – and Alta gets the cream of it, a record 700ins last season. One

of the oldest resorts in the US. Alta maintains a traditional flavour. with snowboards banned.

It attracts powder hounds and, as well as good intermediate and as well as good interinedate and beginner pistes, has some great off-piste access including thrilling steep 'n' deep chutes.
Best of the accommodation is the Alta Lodge. Although it has been

greatly extended from its origins 70 years ago, the wood panelled rooms of the original shack, tastefully refurbished, are still in use.
Alta's neighbour in Little Cotton-

wood Canyon is a larger ski area, better suited to intermediate and advanced skiers. Its large capacity tram (cable car) means lift queues

### **GOOD FOR** CELEBRITY **SPOTTING DEER VALLEY**

Deer Valley has acres of ski slopes groomed in perfect "corduroy" stripes and flowing down towards jaw-droppingly lavish holiday homes owned by Hollywood bigwigs and hedge



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# So easy to fall for Kerry's



# **GETTING THERE**

A SEVEN-night package at Snowbird's huge Cliff
Lodge starting Feb 1 with flights, lift passes and
hire costs £1,648pp based on two sharing
lwww.americanskictassics.com/0870 242 0623).

Crystal offers seven nights' B&B at the threestar Landmark Inn in Park City for £880pp,
including flights and transfers from Feb 11.

SkiSafari.com also offers packages to Utah.
Out of the resorts, there are good hotels in
Salt Lake City itself or, for something a little
different, try the Zermatt Resort near the
town of Midway in the Heber Valley. A bizarre
Disneyesque re-creation of an Alpine hotel,
complete with lederhosen-clad porters, it is
still luxurious and a good choice for families.
Across the road at the Homestead Resort,
you can take a dip inside one of the areas
"hot pots". This natural phenomeno is like a
mili-volcano, a mound with a hole in the
summit, hollow on the inside with a deep,
warm-water pool. At the Homestead, you can
rent scuba gear and dive to the bottom of
the cave pool or just float around and relax.
For a complete overview of Utah's resorts
and accommodation, go to
www.utahski.com/www.utahtravel.com

www.utahski.com/www.utahtravel.com



AWESOME: Deer Valley's immaculate slopes



fund billionaires.Around 3,000 resort staff work in high season. that's one for every two skiers, to provide the service expected by the rich and famous.

A celebrity ski competition, featuring Sopranos star Joe Pantoliano (Ralphie) and Bush frontman Gavin Rossdale among others, was in progress the day we visited.

If you don't already own a huge ski chalet there, you can stay at the luxurious Stein Eriksen Hotel, named after the resort's Director of Skiing.

Norwegian Eriksen, giant slalom gold medallist at the 1952 Oslo Olympics, is still going strong at 81, as immaculately groomed as the resort's slopes. If you haven't recently

won the lottery, it's probably best just to catch the shuttle from Park City to ski here. Like all Utah's resorts it is

independently owned - you can get a three-resort pass for the neighbouring areas of Deer Valley, Park City and The Canyons, letting you ski different resorts.

### **GOOD FOR** SNOW-BOARDERS/ **FAMILIES**

## PARK CITY AND THE CANYONS

Park City has an Olympic rark City has an Olympic sized half-pipe which was used for the 2002 Games as well as four terrain parks. There are also two theme park-style rides piste-side. Kids' ski classes are in small the propriet with provincial skills shill.

groups, with specialist children's instructors.

Park City is a wellpreserved old silver mining town, with an Old West-style main street lined with boutiques, gift shops and more than 100 bars and restaurants. Accommodation is upmarket, ranging from condos to the lavish Park City Resort hotel. It also hosts the Sundance Film Festival.

The Canyons is Utah's largest ski area, with 163 trails, 17 lifts and two terrain parks. Moose wander freely around, at least when Sarah Palin isn't visiting.



**SUNDANCE** Sundance is the resort developed by Hollywood superstar Robert Redford and named after his outlaw character in Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid.

The resort holds work shops for actors, writers and independent film-makers. It also has a strong environ-mental agenda, with wildlife workshops for children, as well as arts and crafts classes.

Redford's own ranch is well away from the tasteful timber-clad resort buildings but he is often seen around.

The resort boasts a high-end restaurant with a tree growing through the centre of the room, which is decorated with the actor's collec-tion of native American memorabilia as well as

photographs from his movies. The bar counter and fittings were bought by Redford from the original Wyoming saloon where the Hole In The Wall Gang once drank.

It's a small skiing area, with one quad and three triple chairlifts but its luxurious log cabin suites with wood fires provide a romantic setting for a one or twonight stay if you're prepared to shell out a few hundred quid extra.















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